BLACK PANTHER
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POWER-PACKED ACTION WITH THE
BLACK PANTHER™
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CHAOS IN KING SOLOMON'S TOMB!
LURKING EVIL STALKS THE HAUNTED HALLS!

With the sleekness of a jungle beast, the Prince of Wakanda stalks both the concrete of the city and the undergrowth of the veldt, for when danger lurks he dons the garb of the savage cat from which he gains his name!

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE BLACK PANTHER!™

EDITED, WRITTEN, AND DRAWN BY JACK KIRBY INKED BY MIKE ROYER OVERSEEN BY ARCHIE GOODWIN

SUPPOSE YOU TOOK OFF IN A PLANE WITH PEOPLE YOU COULDN'T TRUST--IN SEARCH OF A MACHINE NOT YET INVENTED--TO A PLACE WHICH NO MAN CAN FIND!! SUPPOSE YOU HAD TO DO THIS IN ORDER TO SAVE THE WORLD FROM A CREATURE NOT YET BORN!! AND IF THAT DOESN'T SOUND HORRIFYING ENOUGH--SUPPOSE YOU ONLY HAD TWENTY-FOUR HOURS TO GET THIS IMPOSSIBLE JOB DONE!! IT'S MURDER, MAN! IT'S A--

RACE AGAINST TIME

LETTERED BY: M. W. ROYER
COLORED BY: P. GOLDBERG

YOU'RE DOING FINE, PANTHER! THE CONTROLS OF MY MULTI-PLANE REPRESENT A TRUE TEST FOR THE MOST ABLE PILOT!

BUT THEN, YOU HAVE LITTLE CHOICE BUT TO SUCCEED AT THIS JOB!

A KING'S SON MUST SHOULDER RESPONSIBILITIES FAR BEYOND THE ORDINARY MAN!

LUCKILY FOR US I'VE BEEN CHECKED OUT ON MANY PLANES OF ADVANCED DESIGN!

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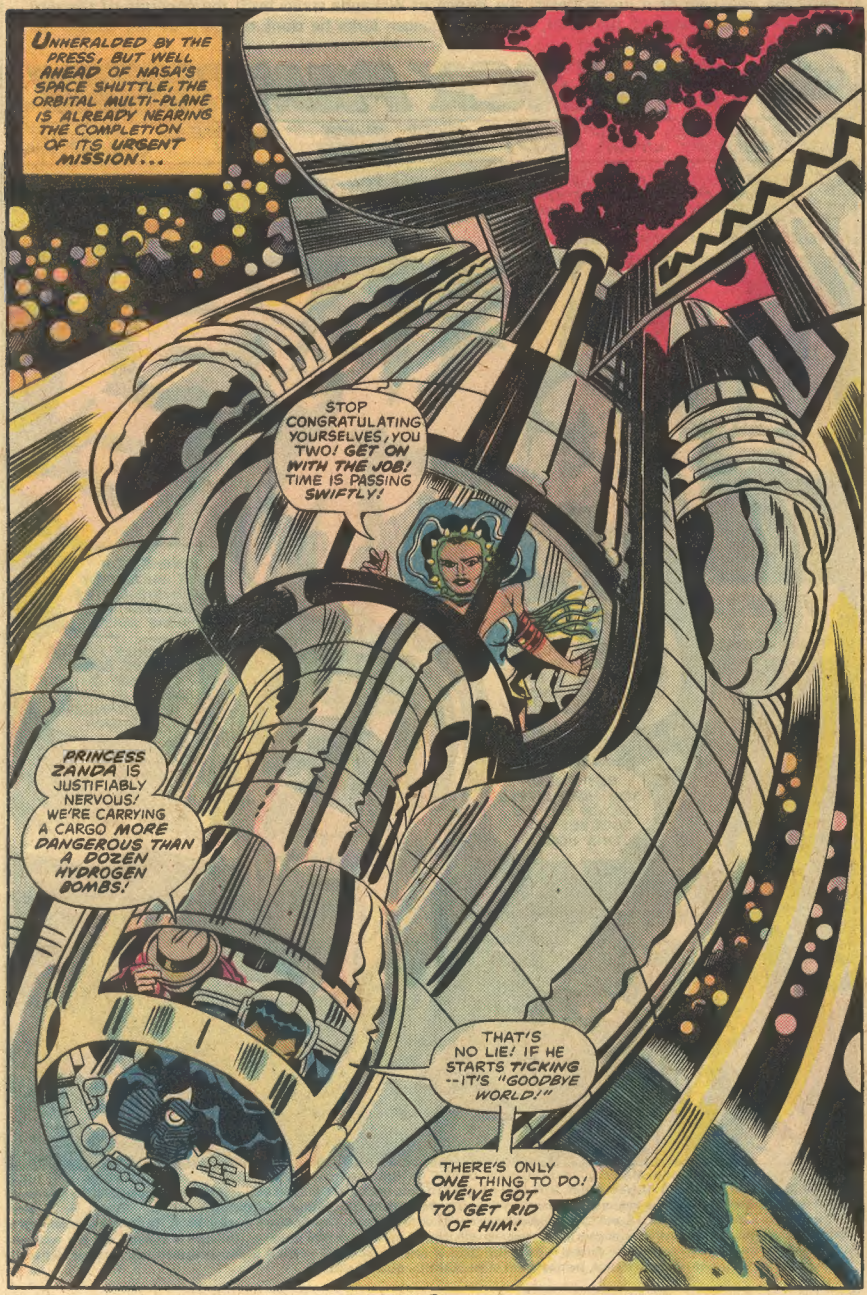
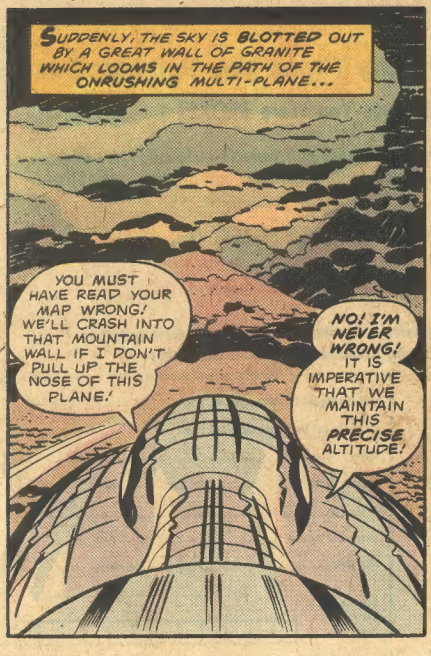

UNHERALDED BY THE PRESS, BUT WELL AHEAD OF NASA'S SPACE SHUTTLE, THE ORBITAL MULTI-PLANE IS ALREADY NEARING THE COMPLETION OF ITS URGENT MISSION...
STOP CONGRATULATING YOURSELVES, YOU TWO! GET ON WITH THE JOB! TIME IS PASSING SWIFTLY!
PRINCESS ZANDA IS JUSTIFIABLY NERVOUS! WE'RE CARRYING A CARGO MORE DANGEROUS THAN A DOZEN HYDROGEN BOMBS!
THAT'S NO LIE! IF HE STARTS TICKING --IT'S "GOODBYE WORLD!"
THERE'S ONLY ONE THING TO DO! WE'VE GOT TO GET RID OF HIM!

THAT CREATURE WOULDN'T BE ON OUR HANDS IF IT WEREN'T FOR ZANDA'S MEDDLING -- AND HER INSATIABLE GREED!!
YOU HORRIBLE LITTLE ANT! WHEN THIS IS OVER--I'LL--I'LL--!!
SAVE IT! WE'RE GLIDING INTO AFRICA!!

IT TAKES SCANT MINUTES FOR THE MULTI-PLANE TO SKIM THE SAHARA DESERT AND REACH THE RUGGED ATLAS MOUNTAINS...
MISTER LITTLE! ARE YOU CERTAIN THAT WE'VE GOT TO LAND IN THIS TERRITORY?
PLEASE FOLLOW MY INSTRUCTIONS! HOLD THIS COURSE--AND STAY ON IT!


SUDDENLY, THE SKY IS BLOTTED OUT BY A GREAT WALL OF GRANITE WHICH LOOMS IN THE PATH OF THE ONRUSHING MULTI-PLANE...
YOU MUST HAVE READ YOUR MAP WRONG! WE'LL CRASH INTO THAT MOUNTAIN WALL IF I DON'T PULL UP THE NOSE OF THIS PLANE!
NO! I'M NEVER WRONG! IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT WE MAINTAIN THIS PRECISE ALTITUDE!

I KNOW THAT IT SEEMS SUICIDAL! BUT STEEL YOUR NERVES TO THIS TASK!
DON'T LISTEN TO THAT MADMAN! PULL UP!
PULL UP!!
I-IT'S TOO LATE! W-WE'LL NEVER MAKE IT--NOW!!

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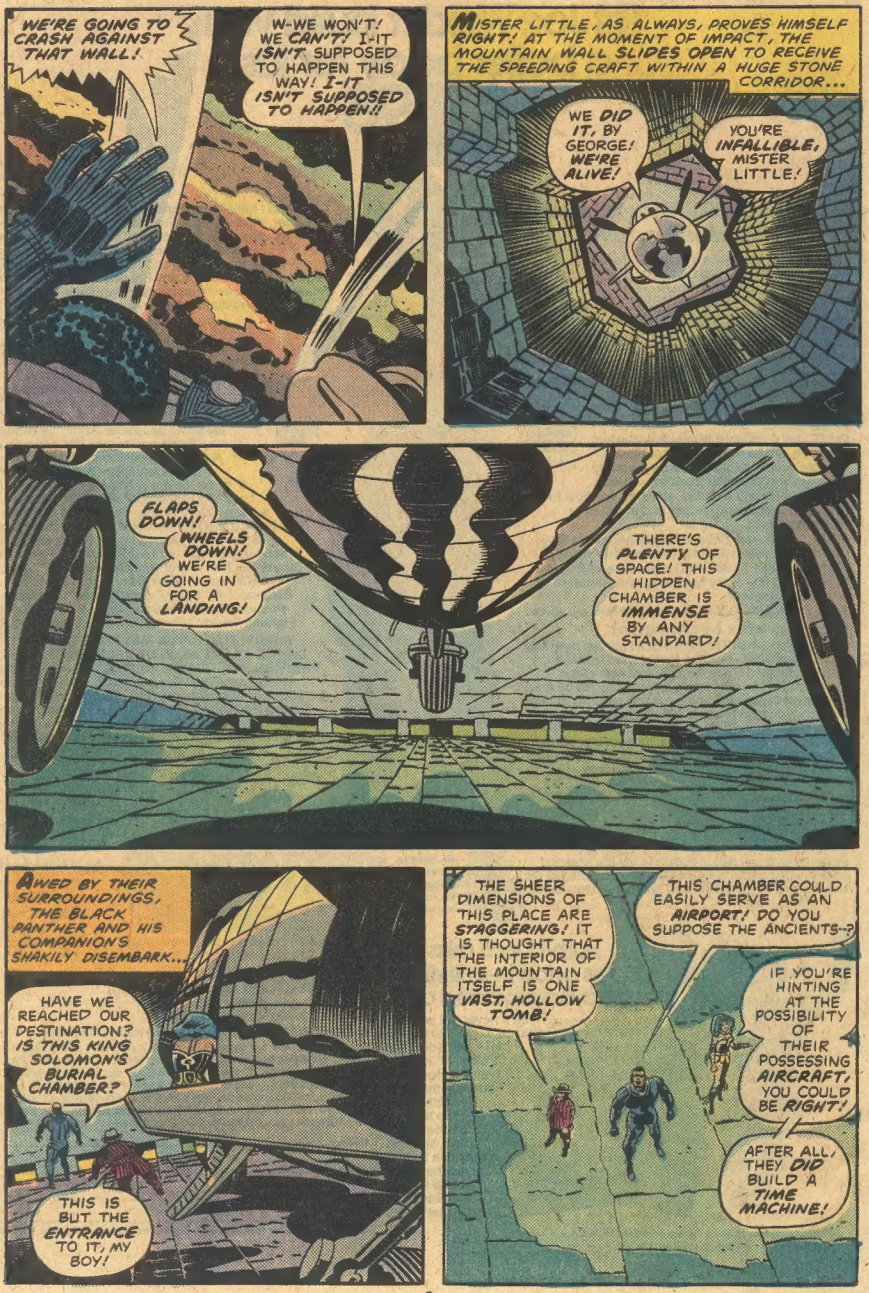
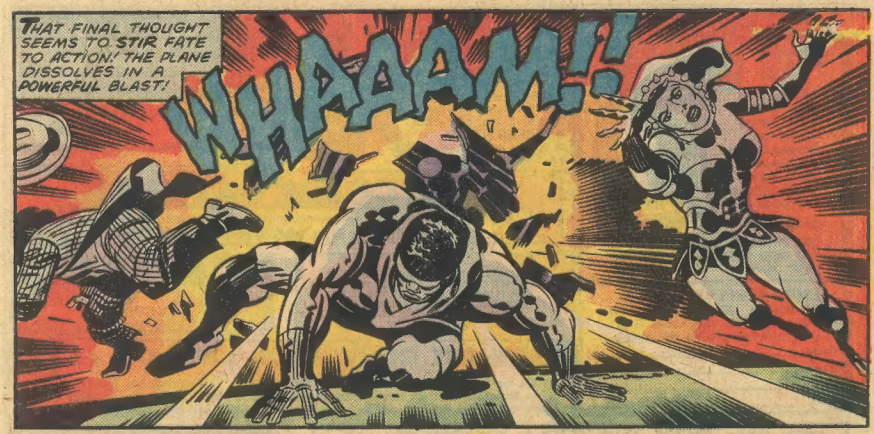
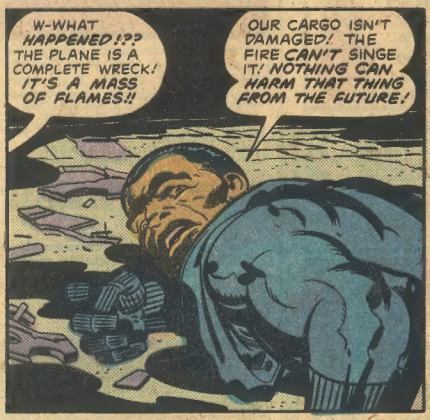
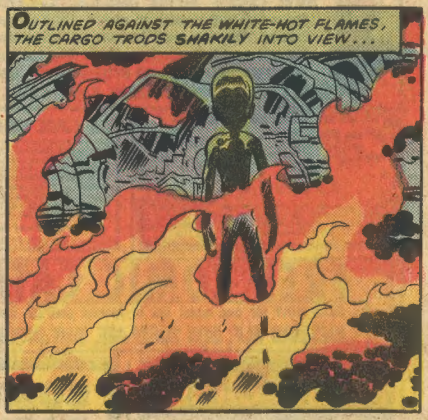
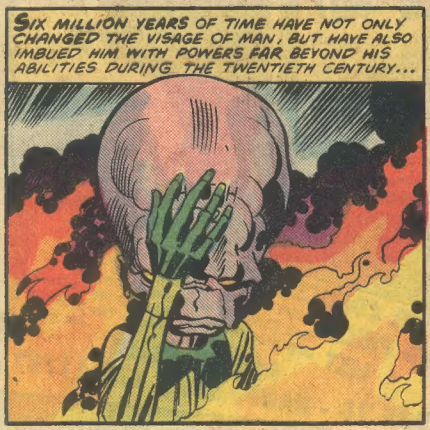

WE'RE GOING TO CRASH AGAINST THAT WALL!
W-WE WON'T! WE CAN'T! I-IT ISN'T SUPPOSED TO HAPPEN THIS WAY! I-IT ISN'T SUPPOSED TO HAPPEN!!
MISTER LITTLE, AS ALWAYS, PROVES HIMSELF RIGHT! AT THE MOMENT OF IMPACT, THE MOUNTAIN WALL SLIDES OPEN TO RECEIVE THE SPEEDING CRAFT WITHIN A HUGE STONE CORRIDOR...
WE DID IT, BY GEORGE! WE'RE ALIVE!
YOU'RE INFALLIBLE, MISTER LITTLE!
FLAPS DOWN!
WHEELS DOWN! WE'RE GOING IN FOR A LANDING!
THERE'S PLENTY OF SPACE! THIS HIDDEN CHAMBER IS IMMENSE BY ANY STANDARD!
AWED BY THEIR SURROUNDINGS, THE BLACK PANTHER AND HIS COMPANIONS SHAKILY DISEMBARK...
HAVE WE REACHED OUR DESTINATION? IS THIS KING SOLOMON'S BURIAL CHAMBER?
THIS IS BUT THE ENTRANCE TO IT, MY BOY!
THE SHEER DIMENSIONS OF THIS PLACE ARE STAGGERING! IT IS THOUGHT THAT THE INTERIOR OF THE MOUNTAIN ITSELF IS ONE VAST, HOLLOW TOMB!
THIS CHAMBER COULD EASILY SERVE AS AN AIRPORT! DO YOU SUPPOSE THE ANCIENTS--?
IF YOU'RE HINTING AT THE POSSIBILITY OF THEIR POSSESSING AIRCRAFT, YOU COULD BE RIGHT!
AFTER ALL, THEY DID BUILD A TIME MACHINE!




W-WHAT HAPPENED!?? THE PLANE IS A COMPLETE WRECK! IT'S A MASS OF FLAMES!!
OUR CARGO ISN'T DAMAGED! THE FIRE CAN'T SINGE IT! NOTHING CAN HARM THAT THING FROM THE FUTURE!




SIX MILLION YEARS OF TIME HAVE NOT ONLY CHANGED THE VISAGE OF MAN, BUT HAVE ALSO IMBUED HIM WITH POWERS FAR BEYOND HIS ABILITIES DURING THE TWENTIETH CENTURY...

HELD IN RESTRAINT BY A POTENT TRANQUILIZING CHEMICAL, THE DENIZEN OF THE DISTANT FUTURE STILL MANAGES TO UNLEASH A PORTION OF THE DANGEROUS FORCES THAT HE CONTROLS...
POW!

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TO YOUR HEELS, FRIENDS! I'VE MISCALCULATED THE POTENCY OF THE CHEMICAL I INJECTED INTO THAT-- CREATURE! IT HASN'T COMPLETELY IMMOBILIZED HIM.!
THAT MEANS HE'LL SHAKE OFF ITS EFFECTS EVEN SOONER THAN WE THOUGHT!
LET'S GET TO WORK!!

THE DANGER HEIGHTENS AS THE POWERS OF THE MAN FROM THE FAR-FLUNG FUTURE CONTINUE TO GROW IN FURY...
RRIIPP!!
WE'VE GOT TO RETURN HIM TO HIS OWN ERA BEFORE HE DESTROYS US!
STARS AND COMETS!! HE IS USING THE FACULTY OF ANTI-GRAVITY TO TEAR UP THIS GREAT STONE FLOOR!

THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT HE'LL DO NEXT IN THIS SEMI-CONSCIOUS STATE! WHERE IS OUR OBJECTIVE, MISTER LITTLE!?
IN THIS DIRECTION! JUST FOLLOW ME! I'LL FIND IT!
BUNGLING GNAT!! THIS TIME THERE IS NO MARGIN FOR ERROR! ONE MISTAKE WILL SPELL OUR DOOM!

WAIT! I-I THINK WE'VE ALREADY SLIPPED UP! WHERE IS THAT ARTIFACT? WHERE IS THE BRASS FROG!?
BY ALL THE ANCIENT DEVILS! I-IT WAS ABOARD THE PLANE-- WHEN THE CRAFT EXPLODED!!
HEH HEH-- WRONG, MY DEAR! IT'S NEVER LEFT THE PERSON OF ABNER LITTLE!

THE BRASS FROG!! SO YOU MEANT TO KEEP IT FOR YOURSELF!
LIKE YOU, PRINCESS, I'M AFFLICTED WITH THE COLLECTOR'S SYNDROME!
BUT DON'T CHIDE GOOD FORTUNE. THE ARTIFACT IS SAFE!
SEE HOW IT FLASHES AT THE TOUCH. THE HANDIWORK OF A LONG-FORGOTTEN GENIUS--A TIME MACHINE WHICH BROUGHT TO US--THAT BALLOON-HEAD FROM THE FUTURE!
TOO BAD THIS CAN'T SEND HIM BACK!
BUT IT CAN! IF WE LOCATE ITS TWIN TOGETHER THEY FORM A TIME MACHINE WHICH WORKS TWO WAYS!
WE MUST FIND THE MATE TO THIS FROG!
NOT WITHOUT MY GUIDANCE, YOU WON'T! SLOW DOWN LEST YOU LOSE ME!
WERE THE SITUATION LESS GRAVE, THAT WOULD BE A HAPPY THOUGHT!
SOON AFTER...
THIS IS IT, PANTHER! THIS IS THE DOOR TO KING SOLOMON'S BURIAL CHAMBER!
I-I'VE NEVER SEEN A LOCK OF THIS DESIGN BEFORE!
IT LOOKS LIKE TROUBLE!
UGH-HH!!
SSKKTCH!

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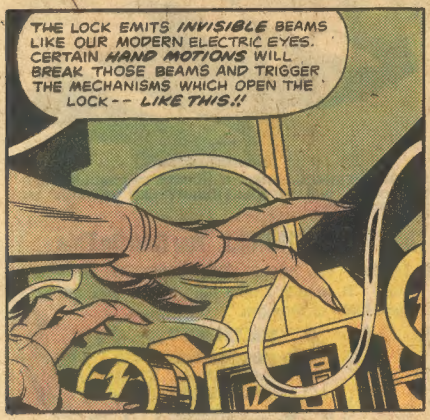
FOOLISH FELLOW! YOU ACTED BEFORE I COULD WARN YOU! KING SOLOMON'S TOMB IS SECURED BY COMPLEX FORCES!
HIGH VOLTAGE FORCES, I'D SAY! IF NOT FOR MY PROTECTIVE GLOVES, I'D BE DEAD AT THIS MOMENT!

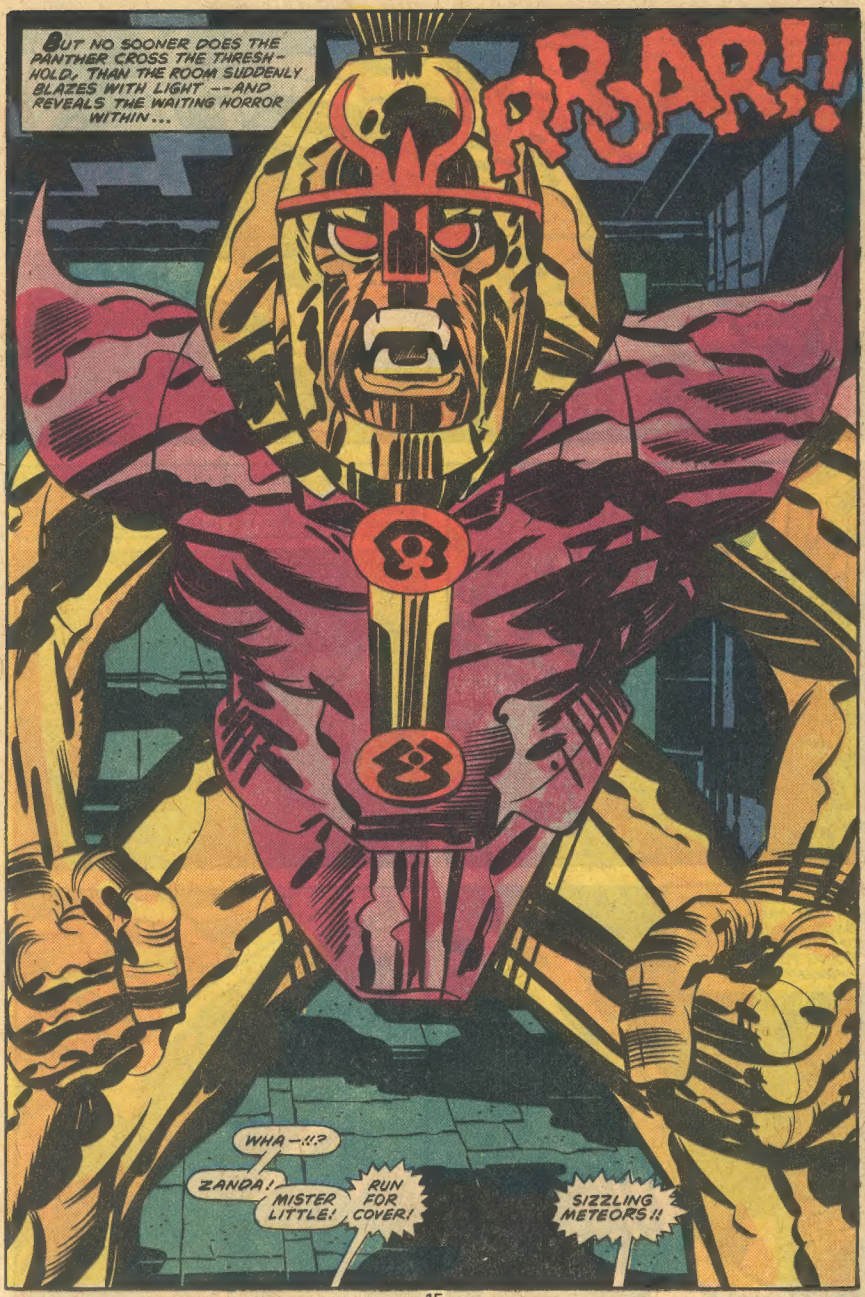
YOU FOOLS ARE WASTING PRECIOUS TIME! THAT'S AN ANCIENT WIZARDS LOCK!
I HAVE ONE IN MY COLLECTION OF RARE ARTIFACTS!
THAT'S FINE, PRINCESS... BUT, CAN YOU OPEN IT!?
A FAIR QUESTION-- WOULDN'T YOU SAY SO, MY DEAR ZANDA?

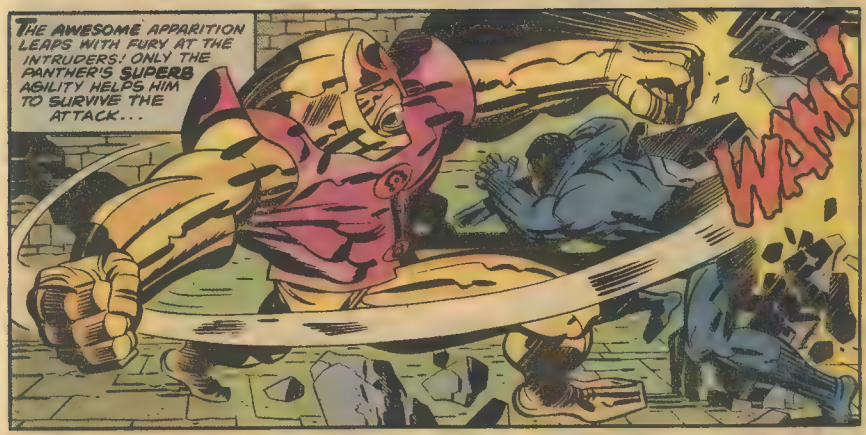

THE LOCK EMITS INVISIBLE BEAMS LIKE OUR MODERN ELECTRIC EYES. CERTAIN HAND MOTIONS WILL BREAK THOSE BEAMS AND TRIGGER THE MECHANISMS WHICH OPEN THE LOCK-- LIKE THIS!!

SHE DID IT! THE DOOR IS OPENING! WE'VE GOT IT MADE!
WELL BLESS MY STARS!! THE LADY IS NOT WITHOUT TALENT, AFTER ALL!
KLAK!

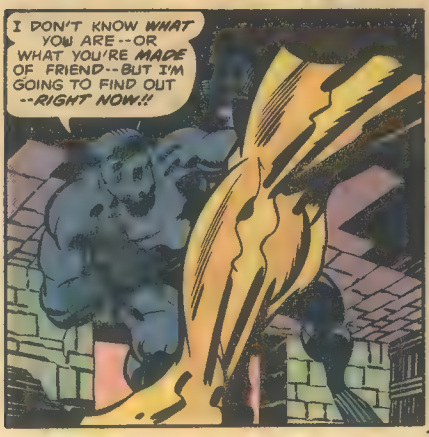
AS A COLLECTING ENTHUSIAST, I BOW TO A CLEVER BUT UNSCRUPULOUS COLLEAGUE!
I LOST FIVE GOOD MECHANICS BEFORE I LEARNED THE SECRET!
POSTPONE THE SMALL TALK! WE'VE GOT TO GET ON WITH THE SEARCH!

REALIZING THE NECESSITY FOR CAUTION, THE BLACK PANTHER SLOWLY ENTERS THE ADJOINING CHAMBER...
I-IT'S CERTAINLY DARK IN THERE-! I CAN'T SEE A THING!

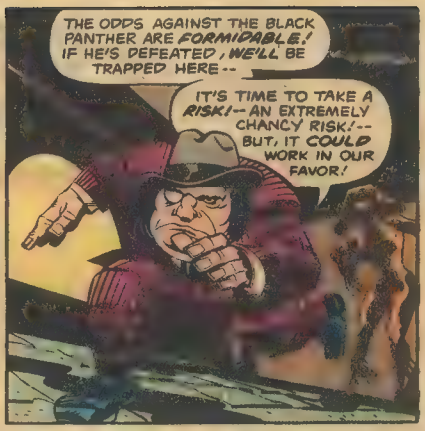

BUT NO SOONER DOES THE PANTHER CROSS THE THRESH-HOLD, THAN THE ROOM SUDDENLY BLAZES WITH LIGHT --AND REVEALS THE WAITING HORROR WITHIN...
RRRAR!!
WHA—!!?
ZANDA!
MISTER LITTLE!
RUN FOR COVER!
SIZZLING METEORS!!

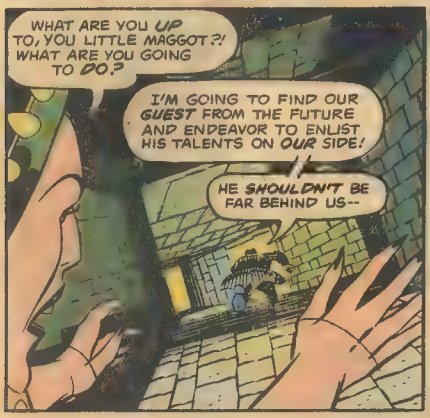

THE AWESOME APPARITION LEAPS WITH FURY AT THE INTRUDERS! ONLY THE PANTHER'S SUPERB AGILITY HELPS HIM TO SURVIVE THE ATTACK...
WAM!

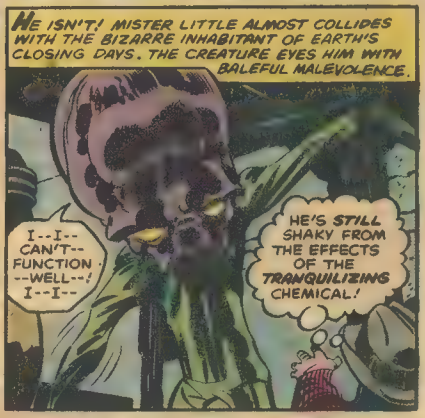
EVEN IN THE FACE OF OVERWHELMING ODDS, THE TIME HAS COME TO DON THE RITUAL MASK AND FIGHT AS THE BLACK PANTHER, FOR THE HONOR OF HIS CULT--AND ITS NOBLE FOUNDERS...



MEANWHILE, THE PANTHER'S COMPANIONS WATCH THE BATTLE WITH APPREHENSION...
TH-THAT MONSTROUS THING LOOKS UNBEATABLE, MISTER LITTLE! WH-WHAT CAN IT BE!?
ACCORDING TO MY OWN RESEARCH, I-I'D SAY IT'S AN "OGAR!" -- A MECHANISM DESIGNED TO GUARD THE TOMB!


THE ODDS AGAINST THE BLACK PANTHER ARE FORMIDABLE! IF HE'S DEFEATED, WE'LL BE TRAPPED HERE--
IT'S TIME TO TAKE A RISK! -- AN EXTREMELY CHANCY RISK! -- BUT, IT COULD WORK IN OUR FAVOR!


WHAT ARE YOU UP TO, YOU LITTLE MAGGOT?! WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?
I'M GOING TO FIND OUR GUEST FROM THE FUTURE AND ENDEAVOR TO ENLIST HIS TALENTS ON OUR SIDE!
HE SHOULDN'T BE FAR BEHIND US--


HE ISN'T! MISTER LITTLE ALMOST COLLIDES WITH THE BIZARRE INHABITANT OF EARTH'S CLOSING DAYS. THE CREATURE EYES HIM WITH BALEFUL MALEVOLENCE.
I--I-- CAN'T-- FUNCTION --WELL--! I--I--
HE'S STILL SHAKY FROM THE EFFECTS OF THE TRANQUILIZING CHEMICAL!

YOU--! YOU DID--THIS--TO --ME--! LITTLE-- ANIMAL--!
I-IT WAS ONLY MEANT TO CALM YOU, SIR-- SO WE COULD--HEH HEH --COMMUNICATE--!
I'M AFRAID HE WASN'T TOO THRILLED BY THAT REPLY!

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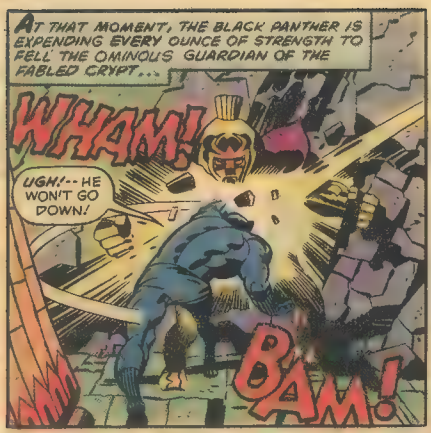
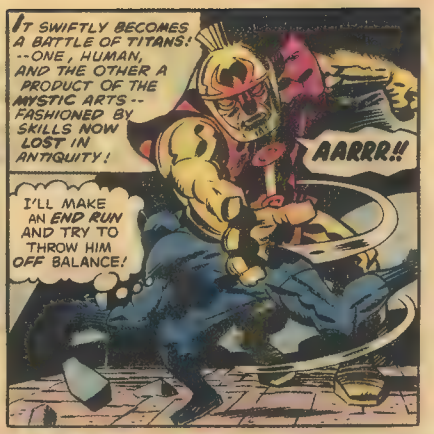
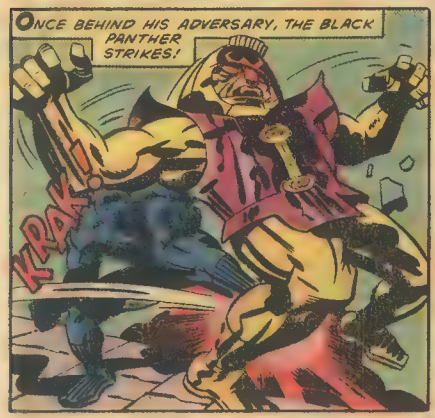
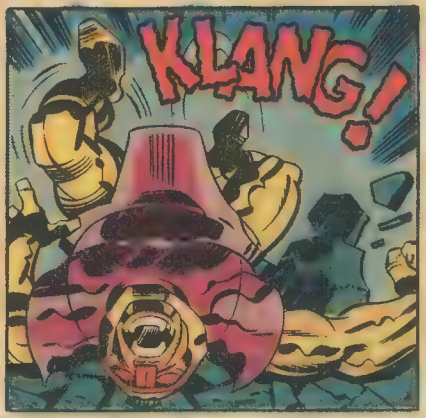
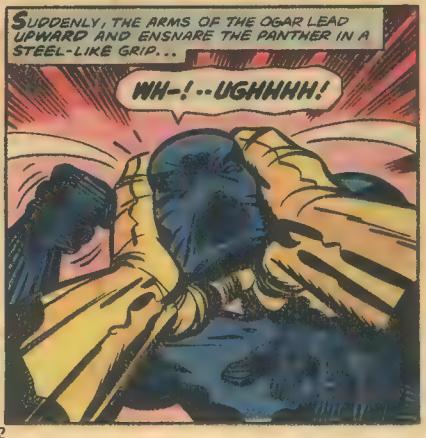

AT THAT MOMENT, THE BLACK PANTHER IS EXPENDING EVERY OUNCE OF STRENGTH TO FELL THE OMINOUS GUARDIAN OF THE FABLED CRYPT...
WHAM!
UGH!--HE WON'T GO DOWN!
BAM!

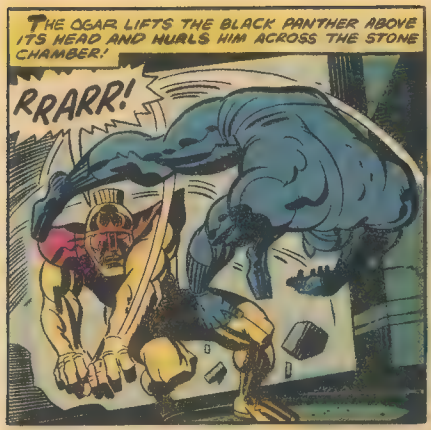

IT SWIFTLY BECOMES A BATTLE OF TITANS! --ONE, HUMAN, AND THE OTHER A PRODUCT OF THE MYSTIC ARTS -- FASHIONED BY SKILLS NOW LOST IN ANTIQUITY!
AARRR!!
I'LL MAKE AN END RUN AND TRY TO THROW HIM OFF BALANCE!

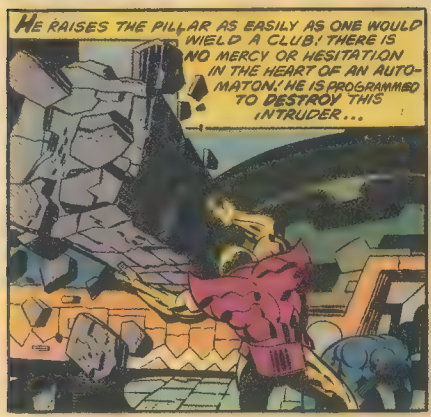

ONCE BEHIND HIS ADVERSARY, THE BLACK PANTHER STRIKES!
KRAK!

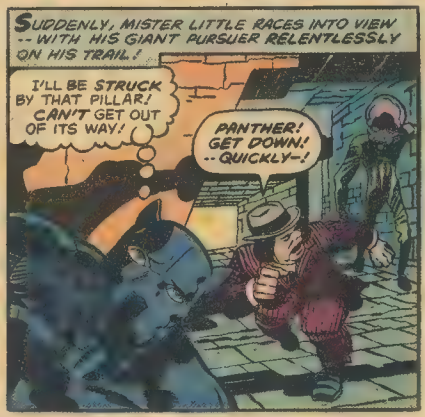

KLANG!

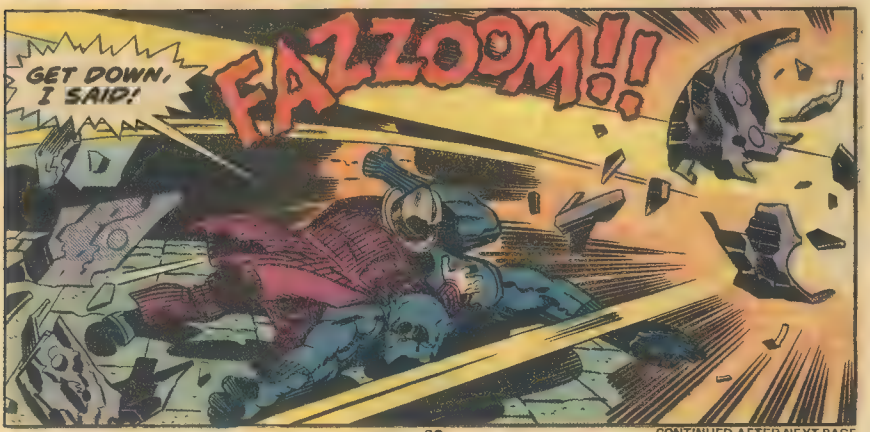
NOW, MISTER BIG, I THINK I CAN DELIVER A KNOCKOUT PUNCH FROM THIS ANGLE-- AND PUT YOU ON ICE!!
I'VE NEED OF ONE OF YOUR DECEASED MASTER'S PRIZE POSSESSIONS!


SUDDENLY, THE ARMS OF THE OGAR LEAD UPWARD AND ENSNARE THE PANTHER IN A STEEL-LIKE GRIP...
WH-!--UGHHHH!




HE RAISES THE PILLAR AS EASILY AS ONE WOULD WIELD A CLUB! THERE IS NO MERCY OR HESITATION IN THE HEART OF AN AUTOMATON! HE IS PROGRAMMED TO DESTROY THIS INTRUDER...


SUDDENLY, MISTER LITTLE RACES INTO VIEW -- WITH HIS GIANT PURSUER RELENTLESSLY ON HIS TRAIL!
I'LL BE STRUCK BY THAT PILLAR! CAN'T GET OUT OF ITS WAY!
PANTHER! GET DOWN! -- QUICKLY--!



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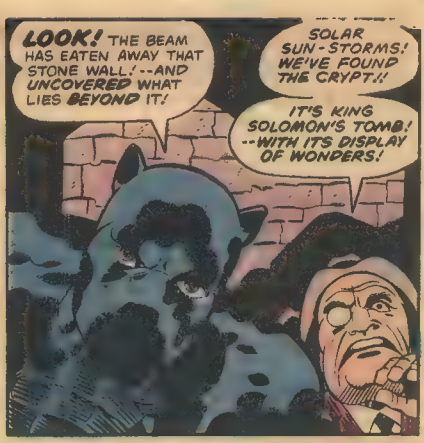
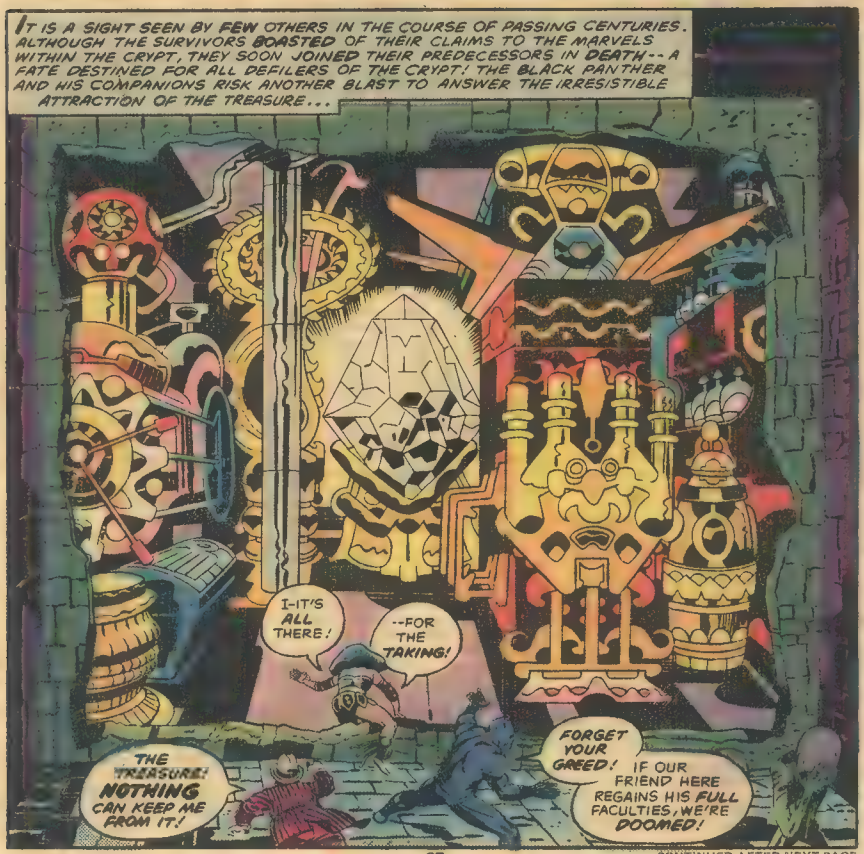
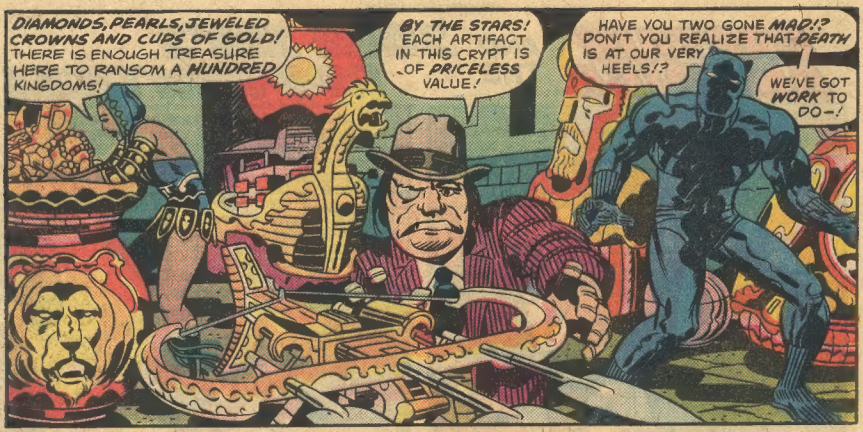
SECONDS LATER...
WH-WHAT WAS THAT!? WHAT HAPPENED TO THE GUARDIAN OF THE TOMB!!
HE'S GONE!
BY THE MOONS OF JUPITER, SO HE IS--! MY THOUSAND TO ONE CHANCE--IT PAID OFF!
ONLY ITS SMOULDERING BOOTS ATTEST TO THE POTENCY OF THE FORCE WHICH DEMOLISHED THE TIMELESS WARRIOR SO COMPLETELY...
BUT THERE IS STILL ANOTHER DANGER TO BE RECKONED WITH! --PERHAPS A GREATER MENACE THAN ANYTHING THE ANCIENT PAST COULD UNLEASH...
FOOLS! THEY'VE ONLY EXCHANGED ONE FORM OF DANGER FOR ANOTHER...
BOTHERSOME --FLEAS--! YOU --WON'T-- ESCAPE --THIS--TIME--!
GOT ANY NEW IDEAS, MISTER LITTLE? WE MAY ONLY HAVE TIME FOR ONE MORE!
W-WE CAN'T DIE, NOW!--NOT WHEN WE'RE SO CLOSE TO OUR GOAL--!
PRINCESS ZANDA SUDDENLY DARTS FROM HIDING. SHE HOLDS A LARGE STONE HIGH ABOVE HER HEAD...
I'LL STOP HIM!
ZANDA!!
DROP IT AND RUN!
HE'S GOT A DISINTEGRATOR EYE IN THE BACK OF HIS HEAD!
THE WARNING COMES TOO LATE! A BEAM LEAPS FROM THE CREATURE'S SKULL--AND--
TH-THE ROCK! I-IT'S-- DISSOLVING!

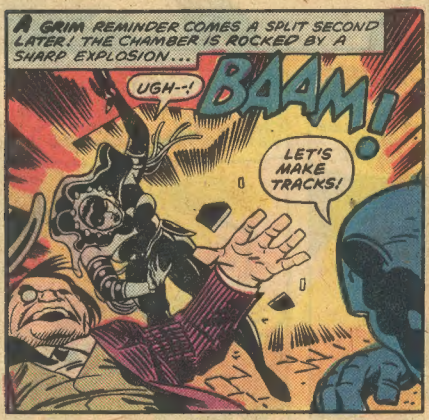
EVEN AS IT DESTROYS THE STONE, THE DEADLY DISINTEGRATING RAY STRIKES A FAR WALL AND CONTINUES ITS TERRIFYING WORK...
ZSSSHH!!!
CURSE THIS THING FROM THE AGES TO COME!


LOOK! THE BEAM HAS EATEN AWAY THAT STONE WALL!--AND UNCOVERED WHAT LIES BEYOND IT!
SOLAR SUN-STORMS! WE'VE FOUND THE CRYPT!!
IT'S KING SOLOMON'S TOMB! --WITH ITS DISPLAY OF WONDERS!


IT IS A SIGHT SEEN BY FEW OTHERS IN THE COURSE OF PASSING CENTURIES. ALTHOUGH THE SURVIVORS BOASTED OF THEIR CLAIMS TO THE MARVELS WITHIN THE CRYPT, THEY SOON JOINED THEIR PREDECESSORS IN DEATH--A FATE DESTINED FOR ALL DEFILERS OF THE CRYPT! THE BLACK PANTHER AND HIS COMPANIONS RISK ANOTHER BLAST TO ANSWER THE IRRESISTIBLE ATTRACTION OF THE TREASURE...
I-IT'S ALL THERE!
--FOR THE TAKING!
THE TREASURE! NOTHING CAN KEEP ME FROM IT!
FORGET YOUR GREED! IF OUR FRIEND HERE REGAINS HIS FULL FACULTIES, WE'RE DOOMED!

CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

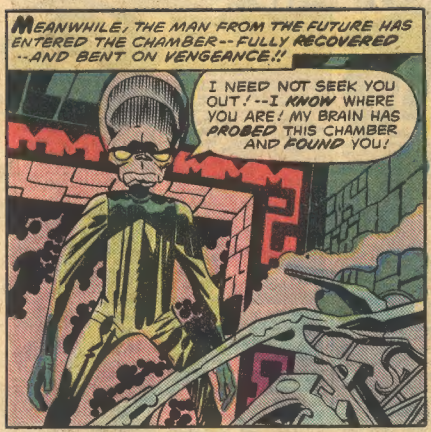

DIAMONDS, PEARLS, JEWELED CROWNS AND CUPS OF GOLD! THERE IS ENOUGH TREASURE HERE TO RANSOM A HUNDRED KINGDOMS!
BY THE STARS! EACH ARTIFACT IN THIS CRYPT IS OF PRICELESS VALUE!
HAVE YOU TWO GONE MAD!? DON'T YOU REALIZE THAT DEATH IS AT OUR VERY HEELS!?
WE'VE GOT WORK TO DO--!

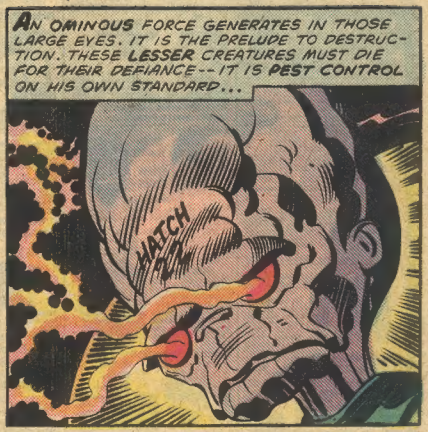

A GRIM REMINDER COMES A SPLIT SECOND LATER! THE CHAMBER IS ROCKED BY A SHARP EXPLOSION...
UGH--!
BAAM!
LET'S MAKE TRACKS!

ASSISTING HIS TWO STUNNED COMPANIONS, THE BLACK PANTHER RETREATS INTO THE INNER RECESSES OF THE TREASURE CHAMBER...
I-IT ISN'T FAIR! THAT THING WILL DESTROY EVERYTHING!
NOT IF WE CAN FIND THE TWIN TO THE BRASS FROG MISTER LITTLE CARRIES ON HIS PERSON!
WAHOOM!!

URGENCY SPARKS A DESPERATE SEARCH! THE BELEAGURED TRIO RACES DOOM TO THE FINISH LINE...
KEEP LOOKING! TIME'S RUNNING OUT!
WHERE IS IT-- WHERE IS IT!?

THIS IS AN IMPOSSIBLE TASK! WE'LL NEVER FIND THAT CONFOUNDED FROG IN TIME!
WE'LL NEVER FIND IT!!
MISTER LITTLE--!
LOOK--! BEHIND YOU--!

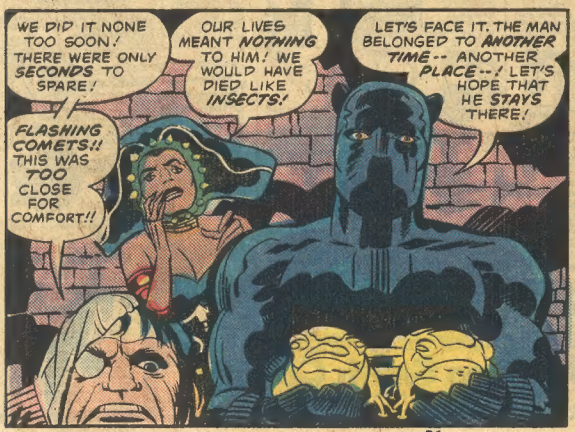

MEANWHILE, THE MAN FROM THE FUTURE HAS ENTERED THE CHAMBER--FULLY RECOVERED --AND BENT ON VENGEANCE!!
I NEED NOT SEEK YOU OUT!--I KNOW WHERE YOU ARE! MY BRAIN HAS PROBED THIS CHAMBER AND FOUND YOU!


AN OMINOUS FORCE GENERATES IN THOSE LARGE EYES. IT IS THE PRELUDE TO DESTRUCTION. THESE LESSER CREATURES MUST DIE FOR THEIR DEFIANCE--IT IS PEST CONTROL ON HIS OWN STANDARD...
HATCH

BUT WHEN HE COMES IN SIGHT OF THE CREATURES, TWO BEAMS ENVELOP HIM IN A NIMBUS OF LIGHT...
ZZSSH!!!

THERE IS A BRIEF FLARE-UP OF ALMOST BLINDING INTENSITY--BEFORE HE VANISHES IN THE FADING GLOW...

WE'VE DONE IT! BY CONNECTING THESE TWO BRASS FROGS, A COMPLETE CIRCUIT WAS CREATED THAT COULD SEND HIM BACK TO HIS OWN TIME!


WE DID IT NONE TOO SOON! THERE WERE ONLY SECONDS TO SPARE!
OUR LIVES MEANT NOTHING TO HIM! WE WOULD HAVE DIED LIKE INSECTS!
LET'S FACE IT. THE MAN BELONGED TO ANOTHER TIME-- ANOTHER PLACE--! LET'S HOPE THAT HE STAYS THERE!
FLASHING COMETS!! THIS WAS TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT!!

THE COLLECTORS STARTED ALL THIS!
WHO ARE THEY?
FRIENDS OR FOES
FIND OUT!--IN THE NEXT MIND-BOGGLING ISSUE...

PANTHER POST SCRIPTS

c/o MARVEL COMICS GROUP, 575 MADISON AVE. N.Y.C. 10022

Mail on the first issue has arrived in mountainous quantities at Mighty Marvel. There are cogent critiques a-plenty, and certainly a wide array of opinion. The following letters are reasonably representative of the majority...

Dear Jack,

The premiere issue of the BLACK PANTHER showed us how you plan to use this character. I would like to offer a few observations. From the first issue, it seems that the stateliness of the Prince of the Wakandas is missing. I hope that you don't plan on transforming the Black Panther into just another super-hero. Although this is an integral part of his character, his royal heritage cannot be overlooked. He is a true leader of men, the kind of leader we all look for. I also hope that a delicate balance is struck between the action/adventure hero and the concern he has shown for his race and for men of all creeds and colors. He is a man who embraces the ideal of freedom and carries it with him greatly. Also, in this premiere issue, we were introduced to some very interesting characters, primarily Princess Zanda and Hatch 22.

There is a great deal of promise for this book. In your capable hands, Jack, I hope that the BLACK PANTHER will rise to new and greater heights of glory. Good luck—and welcome back to the BLACK PANTHER!

Bill Dickenson
5930 W.Broadway Apt. 8
Crystal, MN 55428

Dear Marvel,

I can fully understand and appreciate, though not agree with, your desire for a less controversial storyline than McGregor's "Panther vs. the Klan." Listen, I am not one of Don's coterie of fanatic fans—I quite disliked his LUKE CAGE—but his PANTHER stories were among the finest comics ever produced. They were relevant not in the cheap *chic* sense, but truly relevant both to the special problems of today and the eternal condition of mankind. McGregor's storylines were as complex as the real world, and his characters were genuine human beings. After "The Panther's Rage" and "The Panther vs. the Klan" there is only one word to describe "King Solomon's Frog": obscene.

No, Mr. Kirby, it is not true that every character must retain the format from which he was created. Like a living, breathing human being, a comics super-hero must grow, develop, and change in a manner consistent with his original creation—but change he must. As originally presented in FANTASTIC FOUR #52 and #53, the Panther was *not* the crazy cosmic character you've depicted. He was the chieftain of an African nation which combined its traditional heritage with Western super-science. In "Panther's Rage" McGregor explored this original premise on a more sophisticated and realistic level. I beg you, Jack, don't destroy this wonderfully real and meaningful background for the sake of more space gods and an intergelactic origin of the Panther Cult. The Panther as originally depicted in the AVENGERS was deeply concerned with the position of blacks in America, and again the JUNGLE ACTION storyline, "Panther vs. the Klan," developed this original background in an adult fashion. Please, please, don't abandon this real world to go careening throughout the universe. The real world is what is truly fascinating.

I'm not asking for the return of McGregor. I know that won't happen. I am asking for Kirby's departure.

Jana C. Hollingsworth
925 Fairhaven
Bellingham, WA 98225

Ah, Jana, we have to disagree with you on the matter of Jack's PANTHER. And it appears that most of our readership disagrees with you as well. But don't go away, hear? 'Cause constructively critical letters are hard to come by these days, and we *do* appreciate you thinking enough of us to write.

Dear Sir:

I should not subscribe to any more comic books (nine monthlies and four bimonthlies so far this year). Maybe I shouldn't read them; after all, I'm supposed to be too old for them (28 years, not even a teenager any longer). But I saw the first issue of BLACK PANTHER on a newsstand, and I couldn't resist the temptation to buy it. As a result, the art and eloquence of Jack Kirby, Mike Royer, and Dave Hunt blew my brains dry—almost literally. Moreover, the character of the Panther is so full of action and agility ("breathing human being") that I have demanded a subscription right away. I want BLACK PANTHER to take me to all the exciting, fantastic places my imagination can conjure. And I do not give a damn if I'm too old for it.

Walter Legnani
Room DC-2270, 22nd Floor-UNDP, One United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017

You're *never* too old to read comic books, Walt! That's what the Marvel Age of Comics is all about! After all, if guys like Stan Lee and Jack Kirby can spend most of their time producin' these blamed funny books, with more than a modicum of white beginning to show up here and there in their hair, then a mere youngster such as yourself oughta have no qualms at all about perusin' our pulsatin' publications!

Dear Bullpen,

Having just finished BLACK PANTHER #1, I felt I had to write and congratulate you. What can I say, except that you've got another Kirby masterpiece here.

I did, however, find a small flaw. On page 16, you refer to "the story of Ali Baba and the genie." The story of Ali Baba pertained to 40 thieves, while the genie was to be found in a lamp by Aladdin. Do I get a sparkling gold no-prize for my trouble (and your error)?

Glen McFerren
1743 Portsmouth #7
Houston, TX 77098

King Kirby is just so blasted busy creating his own legends that he occasionally loses track of established folklore! You're absolutely correct, Glen, and while we're fresh out of golden no-prizes, we hope you'll be happy with the ceramic special that's winging your way.

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BLACK PANTHER

scanned by *Wizard*